



Maricopa County

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

West Nile Virus 2005

First locally-acquired WNV human case confirmed

PHOENIX – A male in his fifties from Mesa has contracted West Nile Virus (WNV). This is the first human case of WNV confirmed in Maricopa County and Arizona for the 2005 season, the Arizona State Lab confirmed Wednesday.

“The patient has been treated for mild symptoms and did not require hospitalization,” said Doug Campos-Outcalt M.D., Maricopa County Chief Health Officer.

“We know from last summer how severely West Nile virus can attack. That’s why we are asking for everyone in the community to take the proper precautions to prevent any further West Nile cases,” said Arizona Department of Health Services Director Susan Gerard. “Let’s all be pro-active and ‘Fight the Bite’ together by eliminating mosquito breeding grounds and by using mosquito repellent.”

WNV is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. Approximately 20 percent of people infected with West Nile Virus will feel flu-like symptoms occurring three to 15 days after the mosquito bite. Symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Body aches
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Swollen lymph glands
- Skin rash on the chest, stomach and back.

A small percentage of people who are infected with WNV will experience severe symptoms such as meningitis, encephalitis, paralysis and even death. Persons over the age of 50 are generally at a higher risk for severe symptoms. If a person thinks he or she has WNV symptoms, he or she should consult their health care provider.

In addition, Maricopa County Environmental Services Department has reported [15] WNV positive mosquito samples, [two] WNV infected horses, and [no] WNV infected birds and [one] WNV positive chicken flock.

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Residents are encouraged to mosquito proof their home:

- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites around the home. Drain standing water in potted plants, tires and other containers.
- Install or repair window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out of the home.
- Keep fountains, animal troughs and swimming pools properly operating and free from debris.

Eliminating stagnant water around your home will stop mosquitoes from breeding, however it is very important to avoid all mosquito bites. Apply insect repellent as directed by the product's directions, wear long clothing, and avoid outdoor activity after dusk and before dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

"After you've mosquito proofed your home, work with your neighbors to clean up their yards," said Joy Rich, Maricopa County Assistant Manager. "If you see a green pool or other standing water, suggest it be cleaned up. When your help isn't enough, please report these problems to Environmental Services."

Maricopa County and the Arizona Department of Health Services will continue an enhanced surveillance program including sampling and testing of mosquitoes and dead birds, and evaluation of equine neurological illnesses and human cases of meningitis and encephalitis.

"Residents should feel confident that Maricopa County is working closely with the Arizona Department of Health Services, hospitals and doctors to prevent and control West Nile Virus," Campos-Outcalt said. "However, we need the help of our entire community in order to be successful."

In 2004, West Nile Virus infected 355 people in Maricopa County; 14 people died from the disease.

You can obtain more information, public health assistance, report stagnant water, green pools, dead birds and problems with mosquitoes, or schedule a West Nile presentation for your group or organization by visiting www.maricopa.gov/wnv or by calling the West Nile Virus Hotline at **602-506-0700**.

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